

2

S E R M O N,

Preached in the

Parish-Church of S N A I T H,

On the 18th of *September*, 1757, on the present Disturbances on account of the

M I L I T I A A C T,

B E F O R E

The Rt. Hon. Lord Viscount DOWNE

A N D

STANHOPE HARVEY, Esq;

Published at the Request of his LORDSHIP and a numerous Congregation,

By WILLIAM WILLIAMS,
Minister of Snaith. K

67
L 776
P R O R K:

Printed by CÆSAR WARD, in *Coney-Street*,

MDCCLVII.

A

SERMON

Preached in the

Parish Church of St. Martin

On the 18th of September, 1801, the Rev. Mr. D.



MILITARY

LECTURE

The Rev. Mr. John Venn D.D.

STANHOPE HARVEY

Author of the History of the British Army and Navy

WILLIAM WILLIAMS

Author of the History of the British Empire

Printed by G. & J. Smith, Strand

1801

Printed by G. & J. Smith, Strand

1801



SERMON.

TITUS iii. 1.

Put them in Mind to be subject to Principals and Powers, to obey Magistrates, to be ready to every good Work.

IN the earlier Times of Christianity, when the glad Tidings of the Gospel began to be propagated throughout the World, so wisely calculated were its Rules, so far surpassing the Genius of this World and the bare Light of Nature, that the professed Sages of the Time, in order to support their own Tenets, endeavoured, by all Means imaginable, both to discredit its Doctrine

and derame its Professors. They re-
 pected Christianity as a strange upstart No-
 vel Doctrine, and its Professors as inveterate
 Enemies to Principallities and Powers: they
 endeavoured to possess the Emperors with
 an ill Opinion of them, as a Party of Men
 much addicted to Change, Mutiny, and
 Faction; Men that had shaken off all Sense
 of Allegiance, and, out of a pretended Obe-
 dience to a crucified Master utterly dis-
 owned any Supreme Temporal Power, but
 notwithstanding the cunning and designing
 Craft of their Enemies, both the Lives of
 the Apostles and Primitive Christians, and
 their Writings quickly basted and detected
 these false Pretensions, and exposed their
 Malice: For, amongst all the Heathen Mo-
 ralists, not one so strongly enforced Obe-
 dience to Civil Authority as St. Paul, in
 the 13th Chapter of his Epistle to the Ro-
 mans. I beseege you therefore, my beloved,
 that ye obey the Lord, as ye obey the Lord
 Christ, who is the head of the Church, his
 body, of which he is the Saviour, himself
 the Church, which he hath purchased with
 his own blood, to cleanse himself by the
 word of water, by the word of the
 Gospel, that he might present himself to
 himself a glorious Church, not having
 spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, that
 the Church should be holy without stain,
 as ye have obeyed the commandments of
 Christ, that ye might bring forth much
 fruit to the glory of the Father, which
 is the Father of Lights, who hath
 called us by his Son Jesus Christ into
 his glorious Kingdom, by the blood of
 Christ, to the redemption of ourselves
 by his own flesh, that he might purify
 unto himself peculiar vessels of honour, zealous
 of good works, which he hath afore-
 chosen, that he might shew forth his
 glorious Church, not having spot, or
 wrinkle, or any such thing, that the
 Church should be holy without stain,
 as ye have obeyed the commandments of
 Christ, that ye might bring forth much
 fruit to the glory of the Father, which
 is the Father of Lights, who hath
 called us by his Son Jesus Christ into
 his glorious Kingdom, by the blood of
 Christ, to the redemption of ourselves
 by his own flesh, that he might purify
 unto himself peculiar vessels of honour, zealous
 of good works, which he hath afore-
 chosen, that he might shew forth his
 glorious Church, not having spot, or
 wrinkle, or any such thing, that the
 Church should be holy without stain,

our Instruction, give me Leave to repeat
 the Apostle's Words. Let every Soul be
 subject unto the higher Powers, for there
 is no Power but of God. The Powers that
 be are ordained of God; whosoever there-
 fore resisteth the Power, resisteth the Or-
 dinance of God; and they that resist shall
 receive to themselves Damnation. Ren-
 der therefore to all their Dues: Tribute
 to whom Tribute is due, Custom to whom
 Custom, Fear to whom Fear, Honour to
 whom Honour.

Amongst a great many other Things
 which too visibly shew an undeniable De-
 cay of Christianity, from what was practised
 in the purer Times of the Gospel, nothing
 is a stronger Proof of it than the licentious
 Liberty too generally taken by Men, in
 every Station of Life, in speaking reproach-
 fully of our Governors both in Church and
 State. This Temper hath so far diffused
 and insinuated itself into all Companies,
 that it may justly be accounted one of the
 prevailing Vices of our Age. Need I then,
 at this Time, make any Apology for ma-
 king Choice of this Subject, seeing there
 are such particular Apostolical Directions as
 the Precept of St. Paul, in my Text, is;

who

who, to countenance me herein, charged
Titus, in the Course of his Ministry, to put
 those in Mind, over whom he had the Care,
 ' to be subject to Principalities and Powers;
 ' to obey Magistrates, to be ready to every
 ' good Work.'

From these Words I shall take Occasion
 to lay before you our Duty to our Rulers
 and Governors, as we would be thought
 good Christians, and worthy Members of
 the Community we live in. This Duty
 may be considered with respect to Civil
 Government or Ecclesiastical.—'Tis agreed
 on, by all those who have true Notions of
 the Advantages of Government, that a Per-
 son, who is duly invested with the Legisla-
 tive Power, and acts as Supreme in a Na-
 tion, has, by virtue of his high Station, full
 Privilege, Right and Title, to exact the Obe-
 dience of those who are his Subjects, to the
 Laws once established according to the
 Form of the Government they live under.
 The Laws of God, in a peculiar Manner,
 require such Obedience; and because of the
 Stubbornness and Perverseness of Men,
 the Laws of Man, to add a greater Force
 to the Duty, and more effectually to re-
 commend the Practice of it, have thought
 it

It not only convenient but necessary to annex a temporal Punishment to the Contempt of it: So that as we are on the one Hand by a strict Tie of Conscience, and out of a Regard to our own Welfare, highly concern'd to demean ourselves quietly and commendably in our private Stations, so is the contrary Behaviour an Abuse of the Laws, a high Affront to Authority, and a Breach of that Peace, Regularity, and Order, which our Interest as well as Religion direct to be kept up in a civilized State.

This Christian Carriage towards those that are in Authority, may be peculiarly exemplified in our Speeches concerning them, and in our Demeanor and Actions towards them.

First, We ought to endeavour to support and promote the Dignity of the Government we live under, by speaking favourably both of the Persons more immediately concerned in it, and of their Management; for this would be the most effectual Way to beget in others a good Opinion of such Persons, add a Grace to their Deportment, and Force to the Laws; this would advance our Reputation abroad,
make

make us admired and courted by our Allies, and dreaded by our Enemies; for the Success and Strength of Government greatly depend upon a good Report; Errors in Management and casual Misconduct ought to be tenderly and cautiously spoken of, and, as far as may be, a favourable Construction put upon them. As to speak well of Authority is, on the one Hand, highly necessary to the Ease, Happiness, and Satisfaction of the reigning Prince, and the Prosperity and Good of the Commonwealth, so is it also a remarkable Instance of that Humility, Submissiveness, and Obedience, which ought to be visible in every Christian Subject. On the other Hand, he that makes it his Business, and studiously goes about to blast the Reputation of the Government he lives under, either by open Clamour, or private Insinuations and secret Whisperings, may be properly looked upon as a Traitor to his Prince, and an Enemy to his Country; for Rulers are set up and appointed for the Good of the Commonwealth, to inspect the Wants of the Government, and to guide the Springs and Wheels of it to the best Advantage of the whole: So that he who industriously puts a Stop to their lawful Proceedings, by exposing

posing and discrediting their just Management, must be look'd upon as a Person dangerous to the Community, and an Enemy to the Peace, good Order, and Interest of Civil Society.

Again: As the Dignity and Reputation of Government ought to be kept up both in respect to the Advantage of the Commonwealth, and to the Well-being of every private Member in it, so a due Regard and Veneration ought to be had for it in Honour to God Almighty: For speaking evil of Dignities, and reproaching our Superiors, is a manifest Breach of the fifth Commandment; for, therein, Honour and reverent Respect is commanded to all Superiors, as necessary for the upholding their just Authority: And though our natural Parents, as nearest to us, on whom we have a more particular Dependence, are more immediately intended in this Commandment, yet it has been always allowed that Governors and Rulers are herein included, as having been placed, by God's good Providence and the Voice of the People, in a higher Station, and having a larger Portion of his Authority committed to them; and, as God's and the People's Ministers, are appointed for

a more comprehensive Benefit and extensive Good to Mankind; and hence they have been styled our common Parents, who are to govern and take Care of those who are under them in Civil Societies. For this Reason this Commandment, as placed between our Duty towards God and our Duty towards Man, has been look'd on as having great Respect to both; and that he that breaks this Commandment will be condemn'd at both these Tribunals, that of God and that of Man. And though this may be truly said of almost all Transgressions, yet it appears more eminently in the Breach of this Commandment: And it adds Weight to this Precept, That the Doctrine of Christianity doth greatly enforce it, and strictly requires us to honour the King, and all those who are set over us, either in Church or State.

It is worthy our serious Consideration, that the Apostle, for the better enforcing our Obedience, tells us, in *Ephes. vi. 2*. That 'it is the first Commandment with Promise; that is, it is a great and chief Command, unto which God Almighty hath annexed a special and signal Promise; and therefore duly to observe and perform the Duties of this Precept, is the Way which God him-

self

self hath directed Men to take, in order to obtain his Blessings and the Continuance of them. — This, the Apostle declares and urges, with respect to the Times of Christianity; and the Neglect of the Duties of this Command, so far as it concerns the Terms of God's Promise, is a Forfeiture of the Right and Title we might otherwise have to all the Advantages of Government, and the Blessing of God for our Comfort and Well-being upon Earth.

From speaking evil of Dignities, the Transition is but short and easy to Action, and it becomes generally the Parent of Violence, Cruelty, and Inhumanity, by giving Birth to Tumults and Seditions. A very little Knowledge in the History of our own Country will furnish us with too many Instances of the Truth of this, and therefore I shall not think it needful to mention any; but permit me to deplore the unhappy Disturbances of this Time: The Measure now complain'd of has been long wish'd for, long strenuously solicit-ed, by many sincere Lovers of their King and Country, who would willingly have sacrificed their Lives and Fortunes to promote the Happiness and Well-being of their

Fellow-Subjects — But if, in the Shape it now appears, it be disliked, the Ears of our Gracious Sovereign have ever been open to the humble Addresses of his Subjects, and his Heart always ready to recommend to Parliament to redress every Grievance; and the next Session of Parliament would either repeal the Law, or make such Amendments in it as would render it more useful, less offensive. Why then hath not this Method been pursued, rather than Tumult and Riot? Is it not to be feared that the unhappy Persons concerned in the present Disturbances have been impos'd upon by *French* Agents? Been influenced by the underhand Dealings and sly Insinuations of some Enemy to our happy Constitution, Liberty, and Religion? It is certain this Law is much misunderstood, and as certain that the primary Intention of it was good: It was thought the most rational, our most natural Defence, in case an actual Invasion, (which has been often threatened) should ever be accomplish'd by our Enemy the *French*. I make no doubt but that the unhappy Persons concerned in the present Tumults would notwithstanding, in case of an actual Invasion, willingly afford their Assistance to their Country, and endeavour to repell the common Enemy:

In

In such Cases every Subject, every Man, is a Soldier to defend his King and Country, his Wife, his Family, his Religion.—But, since War has been so much an Art, what will the greatest Numbers of the most courageous People signify, (humanly speaking) when oppos'd to well-disciplined, regularly trained, veteran Troops? The Intent then of this Law is to teach us the Use of Arms, and if it be not (thro' our own Imprudence) defeated, we shall be, in a few Years, a Nation of brave Soldiers, able at any Time, under Divine Providence, to curb the Insolence of the *French*, and repell, with Ease, any actual Invasion.

I have now done with Civil Government, and shall briefly, as propos'd, observe our Duty with respect to the Ecclesiastical; and this may be considered with Reference to the Doctrine of the Church, its Constitutions, and Ministers.

'Tis undeniably the Duty of every one to submit to those Rules that are laid down in the Scriptures as the Standard of our Actions, and never go about to advance any new Doctrine as an Article of Faith, which cannot be fairly proved from those

Sacred Writings: This would be putting our own Notions in Competition with what we believe to be divinely inspired, and would argue in us a great deal of Arrogance and Self-opinion.

Further, with respect to the Constitutions of the Church—The Nature of Religious Worship seems to require an Uniformity in Prayer and a settled Church-Discipline; and it is to be lamented that so many in this Kingdom have set up their own extemporary Performances in Competition with those sounder Forms composed by the wisest, the ablest, and best Christians; and which may well challenge Precedency, for Conciseness, Perspicuity, and Devotion, of any human Composition whatever: It is our Duty then to conform to these Things, and blessed be God that so many do.

Lastly, Under this Head comes to be mention'd the Behaviour due to the Clergy. This I shall but lightly touch on, lest I be thought too partial to my Function; however, this I may venture to say, That a civil and respectful Carriage is due to them: This is becoming a Christian, and
may

may be somewhat necessary to the better Success of their Doctrine; but when they are entertained with Disrespect and Reproaches, these, tending to lessen their Reputation, are, so far as they take Place, like to hinder the Success of their Labour and their Ministerial Office; and the Offender, who commits this Sin considerately and advisedly, so as to discern the ill Consequences of it, must be one who, for the sake of gratifying an unreasonable Passion, is willing to become instrumental that the Work of God and the Happiness of Men, both which are committed to the Care of the Ministry, should not prosper and have the desired Effect. The Consequence of Defamation and Reproach is the same here as that against our Secular Governors, who also are the Ministers of God to Man for good. In short, nothing has a greater Tendency to sweeten the Tempers of Men, to allay their exorbitant Inclinations, headstrong Passions and unruly Desires, as those wholesome Doctrines and sound Precepts which the Christian Religion abounds with; which are peculiarly adapted to introduce Decency and good Order amongst Mankind, so friendly, so necessary to the Well-being of Civil Society, that they tend to settle
uni-

universal Peace and Good-will amongst Men. To make it manifest that we are influenced by such Principles, let us pay that due and unfeigned Obedience to our gracious Sovereign which sound Christianity requires, and the Interest of the Commonwealth justly calls for at our Hands. And may this be the sincere Wish of every one of us, That his Majesty's Counsels may be well laid; and the Execution of them equally successful to the Benefit of the common Cause and Suppression of his Enemies, that the last Part of his Reign may be attended with as much Ease and Satisfaction to himself, as Glory to the Nation, and Happiness to his dutiful Subjects.

7 JUL 66

F I N I S



